

# NOTABLE EDIBLES



## CITY CHEF, COUNTRY CHEF

It has tones of the Ricardo's and Mertz's move to the country. "We came here for the lifestyle mainly," said Mike Mraz, former service director and bar manager at **Hearth** in the East Village. So, along with his wife, Mary (former service director at **Gramercy Tavern**), Claudia Fleming (legendary Gramercy Tavern pastry chef), and Gerry Hayden (star chef of **Amuse** and **Aureole** in the city and **East Hampton Point**), the two couples sold their lives in the city, bought homes in Southold (biking distance to schools for the Mraz's kids), and transformed the old **Coeur des Vignes** on Main Road in Southold into a light-filled dining house with reclaimed chocolate floors and vintage ceiling beams.

going to be able to do what we want to do and hopefully people will enjoy it." Mentored by several pioneers of American cuisines, Hayden, who was busy building the stove, said that "what's in season is what's in the kitchen. Local monkfish, skate, fluke, lobsters, calamari. The abundance of seafood out here is mind blowing. I'm going to try to make a connection for some local pigs." He has already contracted with a nearby biodynamic farmer for veggies and is scouting "undiscovered" East End delicacies like scallop roe. "I find it hard to believe that there are people out there who don't realize this as the next up-and-coming region of food and wine." Better book now. (Opening Memorial Day weekend. 765-0177, northforktableandinn.com.)

## ATTENTION SHOPPERS

A new **Wild by Nature** supermarket set to open by the end of May on West Montauk Highway in Hampton Bays should quench the thirst of those craving an alternative to the typical grocer. Wild by Nature—**King Kullen's** hip, conscientious sister chain inspired by the granddaughter of King Kullen's founder, who in 1995 saw the organic writing on the wall—will provide the same dizzying selection of chemical- and cruelty-free items familiar to anyone who has made a pilgrimage to the Wild by Nature in East Setauket (or the **Whole Foods Market** in Jericho, for that matter).

For shoppers who feel ghettoized by the "store-within-a-



store" model at the Bridgehampton King Kullen, this 23,000-square-foot full-service store will be the largest of the three Wild by Nature's on the Island, and offer a juice and wheatgrass bar, freshly tossed salad station, café, several ethnic and traditional prepared food tables, and all things (frozen and fresh, edible and cosmetic, local and imported) that a concerned parent or home gourmet might need.

"We've had a tremendous amount of requests from the East End," said Joe Brown, co-president of Wild by Nature. "And it's a strong area for the type of market we bring." With Wal-Mart's announcement that it will be moving into the \$15 billion national organic food market, this migration East seems overdue.

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## THE HOLY GARDEN

Recently, Pastor Ronald Reichardson of **Queen of the Most Holy Rosary**, the Roman Catholic Church on Montauk Highway in Bridgehampton, read an article in *America*, the national Catholic weekly magazine, describing the role of churches in “taking care of creation.”

“It just dawned on me that we have a nine-acre farm and I just thought that it would first of all be something that the church should be taking responsibility for, to give an example of being as good a steward of the land as possible.” The result is a newly tilled and newly deer-fenced vegetable garden on a shy acre behind the church.

“It is a voluntary program. It is a little bit experimental,” said Dick Bruce, a church member, who is coordinating the gardening on most Saturdays. “I



think it's good soil, but what do I know.”

In fact, it's prime Bridgehampton loam that's been in pasture for years. So far, the garden includes the usual spring crops, like peas and spinach and lettuce, but the group hopes to complement summer plants like tomatoes and potatoes with ethnic selections such as chili peppers, cilantro, tomatillos, and corn for tortillas, providing a cultural mixing pot for the church's existing Anglo and growing Hispanic communities.

“Folks would learn about one another and at the same time be doing something that's good for their family,” said Father Ron. “Those working the farm would get to enjoy the benefits from the farm.” As they say, may such creativity go forth and multiply. (For information, 537-0156.)

## WINE FOR YOUR OYSTERS

Exclusives on East End oysters are all the rage. The **American Hotel** in Sag Harbor serves “Howard Pickerell's Excellent **Hog Neck Oysters**.” **Della Femina** in East Hampton, **Scrimshaw** in Greenport, and **Lieb Cellars** tasting room in Mattituck serve *New*



*Yorker*-profiled mollusks from Widow's Hole. And **Nick & Toni's** in East Hampton and New York's **Grand Central Oyster Bar** serve rare mollusks from **Pipe's Cove Oysters**.

In the latest display of such shellfish intimacy, **Jamesport Vineyards** in Jamesport is releasing three wines created to accompany fresh seafood and to benefit the **Cornell Marine Center's SPAT** (Southold Project in Aquaculture Training) program to restore the East End's shellfish populations. Since last summer, the winery has sold more than 350 cases, 10 percent of which goes to SPAT.

Bearing a scallop shell on the labels, the three wines include a crisp, bright steel-fermented chardonnay, a fruity merlot from younger vines, and “Cinq,” a just-released Bordeaux-style mélange of five grape varieties from the 2003 vintage. “People sometimes get in a box with oysters,” said Ron Goerler, whose family owns the 60-acre vineyard and who also raises shellfish with his father as a founding member of SPAT. For instance, the self-described oyster nonconventionalist likes pinot noir with oysters and often prefers grilled to raw. “Just throw the oysters on the grill”—concave sides down, of course, to catch the juice—“until the shell pops. Not until they're completely open, because you'll cook it to death. Shuck it and put fresh chipotle on it. There's nothing like popping a hot, steaming oyster in your mouth. You can still taste the brine.”

The winery will hold its first annual Oyster Festival with SPAT and six neighboring wineries and several restaurants on July 9. (722-5256, jamesport-vineyards.com.)



## HAVE CARD, WILL TRAVEL

Membership has its privileges, right? That's what Marguerite Schondebare thinks. So she developed the **East End Experience** card: the first and only discount program uniting the entire East End.

"It is not limited to time or space," she said, referring to short-term events like Restaurant Week or promotions limited to a particular town or industry. For \$25, cardholders get a full year of discounts and special treatment at a long list of business-



es, from farmstands (**Wickham's** in Cutchogue and **Sang Lee Farms** in Peconic) to wineries (**Martha Clara Vineyards** in Riverhead and **Waters Crest Winery** in Cutchogue) to B&Bs, restaurants, beauty salons, museums, and kayak and scuba diving rental shops. (See a full list at [eastendexperience.com](http://eastendexperience.com).) "They are in some ways our own private AAA card," said Schondebare, "only we don't supply the road calls!" The cards have already become popular as corporate gifts, and discounts are available for large groups.

Schondebare, who runs websites to help plan weddings and entertainment on the North and South Forks, has also launched **East End Experience Gourmet**, which works with **A Taste of the North Fork** in Cutchogue to prepare gift packages "filled only with foods produced, grown, or made here." Said Schondebare, "I will be overjoyed if my efforts help to keep the East End a little more the way it should be." (The cards are available at [eastendexperience.com](http://eastendexperience.com) and at various East End locations.)

## TWO FOR TEA

East Enders have two new sources for a soothing cup of tea. **Garden Creations**, a greenhouse and nursery in Jamesport, has opened the **Tea Time Cottage**, a small tea-house offering more than two dozen loose-leaf blends, including some made with mint, lavender, thyme and other herbs grown on site, as well as hot soup, veggie chili, wraps, sandwiches and assorted baked goods. Visitors can sip tea and stroll among the herbs, water fountains, and tropical greenhouses while your companions shop. "The garden is where people want to relax," said



## WINE COUNTRY GETS A WINE BAR

"I knew somebody was going to do it," said Joe Watson, owner of **Vine**, the wine bar and café set to open Memorial Day in Greenport. "And I'm going to be going there every weekend saying I had this idea a long time ago. And I really didn't want that to happen."

So the retired Wall Street guy and former sommelier at **Nick & Toni's** in East Hampton gutted a bright lot one block off Front Street and added a clubby interior, mahogany and marble bar, and grapevine-hedged wrap-around porch inspired by the American Hotel's outdoor space in Sag Harbor.



An impressive and constantly changing list of 54 wines by the glass will be arranged in flights of four, with Long Island white and red flights topping the list. "I see it as sort of a showcase of Long Island wines," he

said. Local winemakers may lead tastings, and Watson is working with **Lenz Winery** in Peconic to develop wines that will only be served at **Vine**.

**Vine** will also feature wines that Watson has gathered from around the world, and a year-round tapas-like menu of local baked goods, cheeses, meats, raw shellfish, salads, and sandwiches using "the treasure trove of resources" found on the North Fork. "I always envied Napa and Sonoma for having access to such culinary as well as wine centers," said Watson, who envisions patrons sipping or eating leisurely from early morning to the wee hours. At the very

least, Watson hopes the bar and café will help remove the pretentious stigma sometimes carried by wine. "You don't have to know anything about wine. You just have to know that you like it."

owner Jim Hise. "When it's nice out, you find your own spot in the garden and get served in the garden." (Open 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Thursdays to Mondays, 5913 Sound Avenue in Jamesport.)

For those who prefer tea at home, Greenport residents Melanie Mitzner and Nicke Gorney have launched **Thegroovymind.com**, the online source for ethical, eco-friendly products, including seasonally harvested teas from India and China. "Trading in higher consciousness," most of their products, including shade-grown coffees, aloe soaps, rainforest seed anklets, Brazil nut candles, and Mexican hot cocoa and chili mix, are certified organic and Fair Trade (meaning that the grower is guaranteed a fair price and other labor rights). Find the teas and coffee at **D'Latte**, **The Frisky Oyster**, and **Vine** in Greenport, the **Village Cheese Shop** in Mattituck, and **Green Earth** in Riverhead. And find everything else at [thegroovymind.com](http://thegroovymind.com).